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## Obama urges Romney to release five years of tax returns



WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Barack Obama's re-election team made rival Mitt Romney a surprise offer on Friday: Release five years worth of your private tax returns and we will stop talking about the other five.

The Republican's response? No -- but thanks for the note.

Obama's challenger, a multimillionaire former private equity baron, has been lambasted by Democrats for refusing to release a decade's worth of his personal tax returns from before 2010.

"Governor Romney apparently fears that the more he offers, the more our campaign will demand that he provide," Obama's campaign manager Jim Messina wrote in a letter to his counterpart, Matt Rhoades.

"So I am prepared to provide assurances on just that point," he promised.

"If the Governor will re-

lease five years of returns, I commit in turn that we will not criticize him for not releasing more -- neither in ads nor in other public communications or commentary for the rest of the campaign."

Rhoades rejected the offer in a casually worded email that began: "Hey Jim, thanks for the note."

"It is clear that President Obama wants nothing more than to talk about Governor Romney's tax returns instead of the issues that matter to voters, like putting Americans back to work, fixing the economy and reining in spending."

"If Governor Romney's tax returns are the core message of your campaign, there will be ample time for President Obama to discuss them over the next 81 days," he added.

Rhoades said Romney would lay out his plans for the public health insurance program for seniors known as Medicare, welfare and the "23 million Americans struggling to find work in the Obama economy."

The email was signed off with "See you in Denver," a reference to the first debate between the two contenders at the University of Denver on October 3.

## Aruba's observations of the AIDS 2012 Conference – Part II

One of the forums which caught the attention of Aruba during the AIDS 2012 Conference was the session titled: "A Global Call of AIDS 2012 to eliminate travel restrictions and admissions for HIV reasons." This session was held on July 21 and was organized by, among others, the UNAIDS. During the presentation it was reported that today, in 2012, some 46 countries, territories, or areas around the world have some form of restriction on admission, stay or residency for those infected with the HIV virus. What was even more surprising was to learn that the name of Aruba, as country within the Dutch Kingdom was mentioned as one of the countries with this restriction.

They explained that this restriction was implemented many years ago out of fear and the lack of knowledge how the HIV virus is transmitted, and what would be the implications for our public health for those infected with the virus.

Experts on human rights and public health made an urgent appeal to countries around the world to eliminate this restriction. The practice of restricting entry was considered discriminatory and ineffective for the protection of public health.

With all the scientific advances related to HIV/AIDS, there are even more reasons to eliminate such a discriminatory practice. Dr. Paul de Lay, who is Executive Director of the UNAIDS program indicated that: "All individuals has the right of liberty to move from one place to another without limitation because of being infected with HIV. UNAIDS opposes such a measure vehemently. He considers any restriction because of HIV to be a direct violation of human rights. He emphasized that the greatest danger is rather, not knowing who is in-



fectured with the HIV virus, nor understanding how the virus is being propagated.

This matter that was raised during the conference confirms the stance against the stigma, discrimination and violation of human rights that Fundacion E Farro has taken. They are convinced that it is imperative that our leaders and politicians of all political parties ought to take a definitive position regarding everything having to do with HIV/AIDS for the Aruban community.

AIDS 2012 has left a clear mandate for the scientific community and all activists around the world. Our foremost priority must be to improve the quality of treatment (medicine and psycho-social care) to resume the quality of life of those affected by and infected

with HIV/AIDS. This also implies that every effort must be made to reduce the cost of medicines and to work on producing and making generic medicines of the same quality accessible.

More research must be done regarding treatment and Antiretroviral medicines to treat HIV and that one day soon there could be a vaccine for humanity against this virus. Anti-contraceptive methods such as condoms must be readily accessible to every one in the community.

Women must be allowed the right to decide what they want to do with their bodies and the right to decide when they want to have sexual relations and when to have children.

Continue on pg 2

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# Multilingual School Project in the making!

Several years ago, the Department of Education began implementing a multilingual school project at the primary school level. They began with a pilot program at the kindergarten level. Kindergarten schools who joined the project were the Trupial Kleuterschool (Sta. Cruz) and the kindergarten school of Colegio Conrado Coronel (Primavera).

## Historic Moment

This is an historic year as they intend on continuing the Multilingual School Project at the primary school level. The primary schools to participate are Colegio San Jose (Sta Cruz) and Colegio Conrado Coronel.

The model of the language used in this Multilingual School Project reflects the wealth of Aruba's multicultural heritage. The project includes, from very early on, the four languages most used on Aruba: Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish.

## Sensible Education

For the first time on Aruba, a group of students will have the opportunity to begin their education learning to read and do sums in Papiamentu. Contrary to learning by heart without understanding, it is a must that children today understand what they are learning, to be able to reason, offer opinions, and apply what they're learn-



ing and to be creative with the information learned. This is what we call, sensible education. This type of education can be accomplished through using the language that the child dominates.

## Begin with Papiamentu

The language that most of our children are proficient in is the Papiamentu. For this reason the program will start using Papiamentu. Later down in the 5th class they will continue in Dutch. Papiamentu will be the language of instruction up to the 4th grade after which it will be one of the subjects. It has been demonstrated that a solid foundation in one's own language, with an extensive vocabulary, is very important for learning other material and for learning another language.

## Four languages

All four languages will always be offered as of kindergarten. On Aruba our children have many resources from

which to draw, such as books, videos, internet, which are in English, Dutch and Spanish. The more they understand in these languages the better use they can make of the available resources for their overall development. For this reason, these foreign languages like Dutch, English and Spanish, will also be introduced as of the primary school, although in the form of familiarization.

Teachers will make use of games, singing, rhymes, short movies, computer programs, etc. to familiarize these little ones with the different languages. We also know that many of our children learn English and Spanish at home, sometimes long before they

begin school.

## Dutch

Learning Dutch will be given more attention than English and Spanish, and will be more structured. The reason for this is because once the child gets to the 5th grade he will continue his education in the Dutch language. It will be more structured because when the child learns to read and write in Dutch in the second grade, he will have to have a rather ample vocabulary to be able to understand what he reads and be able to express himself in Dutch as much as possible. By the time he reaches the 5th grade he must be able to participate actively in the lessons in the Dutch lan-

guage.

**The success of the model requires:**

- **Tesacher:** The teacher must be prepared. Teachers have been retrained and will continue receiving training and guidance.

- **Material:** They have developed and will continue developing material for this new model for all subjects. A large number of reading books have been developed in Papiamentu so that our children can learn to read Papiamentu before they learn the other languages.

- **Reference material** have also been developed which can be used as support material for teachers, parents and the community.

- **Parents:** The support of parents is very important for the learning process of their children.

This model, they believe, will help children to be more motivated to learn, to remain in school and more children will be successful in their studies. This project will pave the way for a more sensible educational system, according to the government.

## Aruba's observations of the AIDS 2012 Conference – Part II

Continued from pg 1



Finally, the message that the Fundacion E Faro brought back from this conference is that we must work diligently, with respect for each other,

maintain open dialogue and do more to promote healthy sex, dignity and prevention. They want to fight for more action and not simply rhetoric and

taking pictures to do as if we are doing something.

According to E Faro, if Aruba really wants to be part of the global movement to eradicate HIV/AIDS for ever, everyone of us must begin working real hard on our attitude, thinking and knowledge and practices. We can no longer contribute to the taboo that exists around HIV/AIDS.

Each if us, they claim, can be agents for change so that we can together turn the page of a dark and sad history and be part of those who will rejoice one day that HIV/AIDS is a thing of the past.

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# Sunday

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## Less KLM seats to Aruba and Bonaire



The KLM A330-200.

SCHIPHOL – As of October, KLM flights from Amsterdam to Aruba and Bonaire will have 210 seats less per week. This was concluded after the introduction of the airline's new winter schedule. KLM will replace the MD-11 with an A330-200 on its route Amsterdam-Aruba-Bonaire-Amsterdam starting October 28. This means 42 seats less per flight (285 to 243), which concludes with five flights per week a total of 210 seats less.

## Group of loyal visitors honored at the Divi Dutch Village Aruba



Recently, the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a group of loyal visitors of Aruba, at the Divi Dutch Village, as Distinguished Visitors and Ambassadors of Goodwill. The honorees are Ms. Amy White who received the Distinguished Visitor certificate, Mr. Herbert and Mrs. Christine Higgins and their daughter Mrs. Patricia and Mr. David Hill received the Ambassador of Good Will certificate. The certificates were presented to them by Mr. Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with Mrs. Hilda Mills representing the Divi Dutch Village.

## New commemorative stamps from PostAruba celebrate sailing



First day issue ensemble



August 9 to 12 was three days of sailing competitions during the 4th Annual Aruba Rembrandt Regatta. Winners of all ages were pleased to receive beautifully framed collections of a special stamp issue that came out on August 5, dedicated to the event.

The Rembrandt Regatta collection is the sixth commemorative stamp issue from PostAruba for 2012. The six stamps were created by island artist Adolfo Valbuena, and have the unusual distinction of being photographs, as opposed to paintings.

There are two stamps valued at 1.50 Aruban florins, two at 1.75 and two at 2.00 Aruban florins. There is a vertical and horizontal stamp in each category. The boats featured in the collection are the Eva Luna, captained by Eric Mijtz, General Coordinator of the regatta, a sunfish, the Ocean 505, captained by Earnie Kervel, now deceased, the Teishi, Captain Henk Weustink, and the Dash, this year's overall winner, captained by Remco van

Dortmond.

A full history of each of the boats portrayed on the stamps can be found at the PostAruba website, <http://www.postaruba.com> under "Philately; Now Available."

This latest issue is available at the post offices in Oranjestad, San Nicolas, Santa Cruz, Harbor Area and Palm Beach Plaza Mall until August 06, 2013. There is also a special first issue commemorative ensemble including the stamps, coordinated envelope and cancellations stamp, designed by the artist.

These stamps can be ordered as well via e-mail: [philatelic@postaruba.com](mailto:philatelic@postaruba.com) for local orders and via e-mail: [ipa747@yahoo.com](mailto:ipa747@yahoo.com) for international orders.

During the regatta award ceremony on Sunday, August 12, PostAruba head of Philately Jennifer Kock was proud to present the special issue as a gift to all the enthusiastic winners as well as notable sponsors as a beautiful reminder of this special event.

The next special commemorative stamp from Post Aruba will be "Domestic Animals (Cats)" by Ronna Lemminga, which will go on sale September 20. There will be another new issue each month until the end of the year.

by Rosalie Klein





## Aruba House keeping a close watch on Holland's "Extended Study" fine

The Aruba House in The Hague is keeping a close watch on the development surrounding the "Extended Study" Fine in Holland. This is a fine that the Dutch government has decided they will levy on students who prolong their studies beyond the normal study cycle for each academic program.

The situation with respect to this fine has become rather interesting in view of the fact that the majority of the Dutch Parliamentarians have indicated that they are not in favor of the measure. The law supporting the measure is to be enacted on September 1st. Every student who takes longer than one year to complete his study program will be fined 3000 Euros extra on the tuition fee.

The Department of Education at the Aruba House did a research and found that scores of students will be affected by this law especially because it will be introduced with retroactive effect. For this reason they tried to alert students about this upcoming measure and its dire consequences.

The word is out; a large number of our students will encounter major financial problems as a result of this ruling. Some are expected to terminate their studies prematurely because of the ruling. Already various institutions have announced that thousands of students in Holland have stopped their study. It has been estimated that by September 1st more or less 50,000 students will be confronted with the effects of the "Extended Study" fine law.

Introduction of the measure appeared to be irreversible the moment that a Judge declared in favor of a union representing students.

On the verge of elections for members of the Second Chamber to be held September 12th, it was observed that the support for this measure has dwindled. Initially it was the VVCD party of the government which reported that they saw no reason for the measure. Now the CDA coalition is also rejecting the measure. The GroenLinks party submitted a petition to interrupt the recess process, so that the Second Chamber can address a proposition annulling the measure before September 1st!

The Department of Education at the Aruba House will continue to monitor the developments surrounding this measure, and they will keep our students up dated. Students are recommended to consult the Department's website regularly: [www.duo.nl](http://www.duo.nl).

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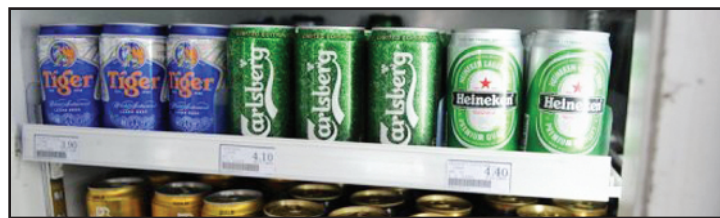
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## Heineken ups bid for Tiger Beer maker to fend off Thai rival



Cans of Tiger beer (top L), brewed by Asia Pacific Breweries, are displayed alongside others, including Dutch beer Heineken (top R), at a convenience store in Singapore

(AFP)--Dutch brewing giant Heineken Friday agreed to a final offer of Sg\$53 a share for Singapore's Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) to fend off a Thai rival and gain control of Asia's fast-growing beer market.

"Heineken today an-

nounced it has agreed a final offer of Sg\$53 per APB share for Fraser and Neave's entire stake in APB," for a total cash consideration of Sg\$5.6 billion (US\$4.4 billion), the Amsterdam-based firm said in a statement.

"The total cash consideration for F&N under the final offer will be Sg\$5.6 billion, an increase of Sg\$307 million compared to Heineken's previous offer made on 20 July, 2012."

The Dutch brewer also said it has signed definitive agreements with Singapore conglomerate F&N regarding the deal and had an undertaking from F&N's board to "irrevocably recommend the proposed transaction."

F&N which directly and indirectly owns 40 percent in APB, had previously accepted

an offer from long-time partner Heineken to acquire its stake for Sg\$50 a share or Sg\$5.1 billion (\$4.1 billion).

F&N's board accepted the offer and agreed to recommend it to shareholders, but Thai billionaire Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi's Thai Beverage and a company owned by his son-in-law, Kindest Place, made rival bids.

Heineken already owns 42 percent of APB and is seeking full control in a bid to expand its presence in the fast-growing Asian market.



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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Colombia drug treatment center plans spark debate

BOGOTA (AFP) -- A proposal to open treatment centers in the Colombian capital for drug addicts is causing a stir in this cocaine-producing Latin American country.

The project, the brainchild of Bogota mayor Gustavo Petro, is aimed at curbing drug-related crime. Petro's office says it is similar to programs in Canada, Portugal, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

The plan is to treat the addicts with prescription medication, said Bogota Health Secretary Guillermo Alfonso Jaramillo.

Colombia has long focused on breaking up the criminal gangs responsible for trafficking illegal drugs to lucrative markets in the United States and Europe, but ignored the growing local population of addicts.

The centers are planned for three neighborhoods with large numbers of addicts and would especially target people hooked on "basuco," a cheap, highly addictive cocaine derivative similar to crack.

Nurses, doctors and psychiatrists would be on hand to treat the addicts. The centers

would also provide food, access to bathroom facilities and even toys for children.

Last month, Colombia's Congress passed a law calling for drug addiction to be seen as a public health problem and not as a crime.

According to the mayor's office, 125,000 of Bogota's 7.3 million inhabitants use drugs. Of those, 70,000 are addicts, including some 7,000 basuco addicts.

If approved by the federal government, the centers could open in September.

Petro's proposal "has started a debate on the domestic consumption of cannabis, cocaine, basuco and heroin," said Alvaro Enciso, president of the La Luz foundation that supports drug addicts.

The project's detractors including Colombian Attorney General Alejandro Ordonez, who claims such centers "promote" drug consumption and that there is no certainty they cause a decrease in offenses.

In 2011, 252 of Bogota's 1,632 registered homicides -- 15.4 percent -- were linked to drugs, according to official figures.

### With Assange inside, UK police guard Ecuador embassy

LONDON (AFP) -- Julian Assange was holed up in Ecuador's London embassy yesterday with police guarding its exits after Britain warned that the diplomatic standoff over the WikiLeaks founder could go on for years.

Ecuador granted asylum on Thursday to Assange -- whose website enraged the United States by publishing a vast cache of confidential government files -- but Britain has vowed not to grant him safe passage out of the country.

British Foreign Secretary William Hague said his government was obliged under its own laws to extradite the Australian national to Sweden, where he is wanted for questioning over alleged sex

crimes.

"No one, least of all the government of Ecuador, should be in any doubt that we are determined to carry out our legal obligation to see Mr Assange extradited to Sweden," Hague told a press conference on Thursday.

He admitted that the stalemate could continue for months or even years.

Some 20 British police were stationed outside the embassy early yesterday, ready to arrest 41-year-old Assange if he leaves the building.

WikiLeaks condemned the continued police presence as "intimidation tactics".

A handful of supporters of the former computer hacker camped overnight outside the

embassy in London's plush Knightsbridge district in a bid to "guard" Assange against any potential attempt to arrest him.

WikiLeaks said on Twitter that he would give a statement in front of the embassy on Sunday, though it did not specify whether this would involve leaving the building and, if so, how he would do so without being arrested.

Under normal diplomatic procedures, embassies are considered the territory of the countries they represent and cannot be entered without permission.

Britain has angered Ecuador by suggesting it could invoke a domestic law allowing it to breach the usual rules and go in to arrest Assange.

### S.Africa police say mine killings were self-defence; 34 dead

MARIKANA (AFP) - South Africa's national police chief said yesterday that her forces opened fire in self-defence after coming under attack by armed mine workers, leaving 34 people dead and 78 injured.

"The militant group stormed toward the police, firing shots and wielding dangerous weapons," Riah Phiyega told a news conference.

"Police retreated systematically and were forced to utilise maximum force to defend themselves. The total death (toll) of the protesters currently stands at 34 with more than 78 injured."

So far 259 people have been arrested on various charges stemming from the clash Thursday at the platinum mine run by London-listed

Lonmin, she said.

Police played video footage of their efforts to disperse striking miners, including a series of negotiations and crowd-control tactics such as firing teargas, water cannons, stun grenades and rubber bullets.

In one video, an officer begged the miners to disperse, saying: "We are not here to arrest you, our only problem is with the weapons."

Phiyega said police initially tried to break up the crowd into smaller groups to make them easier to disarm, but the miners refused to heed calls to disperse and lay down their weapons.

She insisted that justified the use of force.

"The police started by using minimum force, which is al-

lowed in terms of our policy and the law," she said.

"Only when that did that not stop protesters, we then brought another support," she said. "And therefore I feel strongly and we feel... that it was justified. We didn't want anyone to die."

General Schlahle Mase-mola, a crime intelligence official, said police at the scene believed they wouldn't survive if they kept firing rubber bullets.

"For the police to protect themselves and for the police to protect their own colleagues, they realised that the usage of the rubber bullet is not... applicable and to survive, they escalated the usage of force."

### Infamous British killer may have revealed grave site

LONDON (AFP) -- Notorious jailed British killer Ian Brady, who murdered five children in the 1960s, may have revealed the grave site of one of his victims to a long-term visitor, police announced yesterday.

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) said in a statement that Brady, also known as the Moors Murderer, may have revealed the burial site of 12-year-old Keith Bennett, the only one of his victims whose body is yet to be found.

The force also announced that it was questioning a 49-year-old woman after she was arrested in Wales on suspicion of preventing the burial of a body without lawful exercise.

"On 30 July 2012, Greater Manchester Police received information that led officers to believe that Ian Brady had recently given details of the location of Keith Bennett's body to one of his long-term visitors," said the GMP statement.

Officers made the arrest after working closely with Ashworth hospital, the psychiatric institution in northwest England where Brady, 74, is being held.

Between 1963 and 1965, Brady and his partner Myra Hindley lured five children and teenagers to their deaths, burying four of them on remote moorland near Manchester.

Brady was convicted of

three of the murders and later confessed to two more.

The bodies of Lesley Ann Downey and John Kilbride were found in 1965, and Pauline Reade's remains were located in 1987 but Bennett's body has never been found.

Bennett was abducted on June 16, 1964, after he left home to visit his grandmother and his family have since waged a relentless campaign to locate his remains.

Winnie Johnson, Keith's mother, said in December she wanted Brady to tell her in person where her son was buried.

Hindley died in prison in 2002, aged 60.



**South Korean protesters shout slogans during a rally against Japan's sovereignty claims over islets called Dokdo in South Korea, known as Takeshima in Japan, in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, South Korea, Friday, Aug. 17, 2012. South Korea called on Japan to withdraw its proposal to take the issue of Dokdo, Seoul's easternmost islets claimed by Tokyo as its territory, to an international court, vowing to take "stern measures" unless Japan retracts the plan.**



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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Two US troops killed in latest 'green-on-blue' attacks

KABUL (AFP) - Two Afghan security personnel opened fire on Western colleagues yesterday, killing two US soldiers and causing a number of other casualties in two separate attacks, the military said.

US concern is mounting of the unprecedented number of such "green-on-blue" attacks, which have now killed 39 international troops in 29 such incidents so far this year, according to NATO figures.

Yesterday's attacks will further erode trust between foreign troops and the Afghans they work with, a week after six American troops were killed in a single day by their local colleagues.

The two Americans were killed in western Farah province, NATO's US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said.

Just hours later, ISAF confirmed that "a number" of foreign and Afghan soldiers were shot and wounded by an Afghan soldier in the southern province of Kandahar.

"The attacker was shot and

later died of his wounds in the hospital," a spokesman said, without providing any further details. Local officials said two Americans and one Afghan soldier were wounded.

US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Tuesday he was "very concerned" about the attacks and the impact they are having on cooperation with Afghan allies.

The Taliban's reclusive supreme leader, Mullah Omar, has boasted that the attacks are the result of a deliberate plan by the Islamist militants to sow distrust between foreign and Afghan troops.

"Mujahideen (holy warriors) have cleverly infiltrated in the ranks of the enemy according to the plan given to them last year," Omar said in a message to mark the Eid-ul-Fitr celebration at the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

NATO says most of the incidents are motivated by cultural differences between troops and plays down the role of Taliban infiltration.

### 'Ahmadinejad: Tumour' of Israel will soon be destroyed

TEHRAN (AFP) - Israel is a "cancerous tumour" that will soon be finished off, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad yesterday told demonstrators holding an annual protest against the existence of the Jewish state.

"The Zionist regime and the Zionists are a cancerous tumour. Even if one cell of them is left in one inch of (Palestinian) land, in the future this story (of Israel's existence) will repeat," he said in a speech in Tehran marking Iran's Quds Day that was broadcast on state television.

"The nations of the region will soon finish off the usurper Zionists in the Palestinian land.... A new Middle East will definitely be formed. With the grace of God and help of the nations, in the new Middle East there will be no trace of the Americans and Zionists," he said.

The diatribe took place amid heightened tensions between Israel and Iran over Tehran's disputed nuclear program.

The Jewish state has in recent weeks intensified its

threats to possibly bomb Iran's nuclear facilities to prevent it having the capability to produce atomic weapons.

Iran, which is suffering under severe Western sanctions, denies its nuclear program is anything but peaceful. Its military has warned it will destroy Israel if it attacks.

"They (the Israelis) know very well they don't have the ability" to successfully attack Iran, foreign ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast was quoted as saying by the ISNA news agency.

"If they make a mistake, our nation's reaction will lead to the end of the Zionist regime," he said.

State television showed crowds marching under blazing sunshine in Tehran and other Iranian cities to mark Quds Days, whose name, derived from Arabic, designates the city of Jerusalem, the disputed future capital of both the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Demonstrators held up Palestinian flags and pictures of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and

banners reading "Death to Israel" and "Death to America." A group in Tehran was shown burning an Israeli flag.

The marches have been an annual event during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in Iran, ever since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

They underline Iran's antipathy to Israel and its ally the United States, and support for the Palestinian cause, which Khamenei on Wednesday called "a religious duty."

The supreme leader described Israel as a "bogus and fake Zionist outgrowth" in the Middle East that "will disappear."

Ahmadinejad, in his speech, claimed that "Zionists" triggered the first and second world wars, and had "taken control over world affairs since the moment they became dominant over the US government."

He asserted that major governments, banks and media were in thrall to a Zionist cabal whose aim was to "destroy the cultures, values and sovereignty of nations."



## Health & Living

# Colombia drug treatment center plans spark debate



BOGOTA (AFP) - A proposal to open treatment centers in the Colombian capital for drug addicts is causing a stir in this cocaine-producing Latin American country.

The project, the brainchild of Bogota mayor Gustavo Petro, is aimed at curbing drug-related crime. Petro's office says it is similar to programs in Canada, Portugal, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

The plan is to treat the addicts with prescription medication, said Bogota Health Secretary Guillermo Alfonso Jaramillo.

Colombia has long focused on breaking up the criminal gangs responsible for trafficking illegal drugs to lucrative markets in the United States and Europe, but ignored the growing local population of addicts.

The centers are planned for

three neighborhoods with large numbers of addicts and would especially target people hooked on "basuko," a cheap, highly addictive cocaine derivative similar to crack.

Nurses, doctors and psychiatrists would be on hand to treat the addicts. The centers would also provide food, access to bathroom facilities and even toys for children.

Last month, Colombia's Congress passed a law calling for drug addiction to be seen as a public health problem and not as a crime.

According to the mayor's office, 125,000 of Bogota's 7.3 million inhabitants use drugs. Of those, 70,000 are addicts, including some 7,000 basuko addicts.

If approved by the federal government, the centers could open in September.

Petro's proposal "has started

a debate on the domestic consumption of cannabis, cocaine, basuko and heroin," said Alvaro Enciso, president of the La Luz foundation that supports drug addicts.

The project's detractors including Colombian Attorney General Alejandro Ordóñez, who claims such centers "promote" drug consumption and that there is no certainty they cause a decrease in offenses.

In 2011, 252 of Bogota's 1,632 registered homicides -- 15.4 percent -- were linked to drugs, according to official figures.

In the 1980s and early 1990s Colombian cartels dominated the American drug trade, but a US-supported government crackdown has left local cartels in increasing disarray.

The regional cocaine trade, however, is still alive and well: in 2011 Colombia was the world's largest cocaine producer, according to a United Nations report. Colombia and neighboring Peru are the world's largest producers of coca, the plant used to make cocaine, according to the report.

Colombian criminal gangs as well as leftist guerrillas and right-wing paramilitary groups sell the cocaine to Mexican criminal syndicates, who then smuggle it into the United States and Europe.

## Cuba issues warning about dengue mosquitos

HAVANA (AFP) -Cuban health officials warned Thursday about an increased number of mosquitoes in the country's urban areas that can spread diseases such as dengue fever.

The communist island's 23 largest municipalities are affected by an uptick of the Aedes aegypti mosquito, including the capital Havana, state television reported.

Authorities in Cuba have not released any numbers on confirmed cases of dengue fever or other diseases transmitted by the mosquito.

The Pan American Health Organization recently warned about the resurgence of dengue cases in Central America and the Caribbean during the second half of 2012.

It said more than a million cases of dengue fever and 719 related deaths were recorded in the region in 2011.



WASHINGTON (AFP) - Aircraft have begun spraying pesticide over parts of Dallas, Texas to combat an outbreak of mosquito-borne West Nile Virus blamed for 17 deaths this year, authorities said Friday. Four more aircraft were to resume spraying later Friday, and residents were cautioned to avoid going outdoors, keep pets inside, cover ornamental fishponds and rinse off homegrown fruits and vegetables. Throughout the state 465 people have been sickened since the start of the year, putting it on track to have the most cases since the disease first emerged a decade ago, the department said. The county incorporating Dallas, the ninth-largest city in the United States, has been the hardest hit, prompting the mayor to declare a local state of disaster on Wednesday. The virus has claimed ten lives in the county so far, local and state health authorities said. First discovered in Uganda in 1937, the virus is carried by birds and spread to humans by mosquitoes.



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## Dinner

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## Research on mice boosts hopes for 'male Pill'



PARIS (AFP) - Groundbreaking work with lab mice has boosted hopes for a male contraceptive pill, researchers in the United States reported.

A compound initially sketched as a candidate for blocking cancer has been found to stop sperm generation in mice, they said.

Once the drug was halted, the rodents recovered fertility and were able to sire perfectly healthy offspring.

The drug is known by its lab name JQ1, after a chemist, Jun Qi, who devised it, initially with the idea of disrupting a cancer-causing gene called BRD4.

But it has also been found to inhibit proteins called bromodomains, one of which, BRDT, plays a key role in generating sperm in the testes.

By latching onto BRDT, JQ1 reduces dramatically both the number and quality of sperm, effectively leaving the

mice infertile.

One of the attractions of JQ1 is that it is a small molecule, meaning that it can sneak through the physical barrier between blood vessels and specialised sperm-making cells in the testes. Large molecules cannot do this, a problem that has thwarted work in the past.

Male contraception is limited to the condom or vasectomy, so an easy-to-use reversible option is badly needed.

JQ1 is unlikely to be the desired outcome by itself "because it also binds other members of the bromodomain family," explained Matzuk.

"However, the data is proof of principle that BRDT is an excellent target for male contraception and provides us with useful information for future drug development."

The study appears in the US journal Cell.



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## Sci-Tech

### Uganda tightens internet security after pro-gay attacks



KAMPALA (AFP) - Uganda is tightening its Internet security after hackers attacked the prime minister's website to post statements supporting gay rights, the country's Internet regulator said Friday.

Activists hacked into the website of the prime minister's office earlier this week and posted a fake press release announcing the minister's support for a gay pride parade.

Pro-gay activists targeted Uganda after a controversial bill that would see certain homosexual acts punished by the death penalty was re-introduced to parliament earlier this year.

Homosexuality is already illegal in Uganda, but the proposed legislation has previously attracted heavy criticism

for the draconian penalties it proposed.

It would introduce the death sentence for anyone caught engaging in homosexual acts for the second time, as well as for gay sex where one partner is a minor or has HIV.

The statement posted online claimed to be from the prime minister's office and condemned widespread homophobia in Uganda.

"We have got to expel the narrow mindedness from this country, and begin afresh, starting with a full and formal apology to all homosexuals living in Uganda today," the statement, purporting to be from Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi, said. The statement had been removed from the website as of Friday.

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### US carbon emissions in surprise drop

(AFP) - US emissions of carbon dioxide blamed for climate change fell in 2011 and have slipped to a 20-year low this year as the world's largest

economy uses more natural gas and less coal, data shows.

The surprise drop from the world's second biggest emitter comes despite the lack of legislation on climate change but it was unclear if the change marked a trend or would be enough to meet goals on fighting global warming.

Official data showed that

energy-related US carbon emissions fell by 2.4 percent in 2011 from the previous year.

The government agency said that the drop in emissions in the first quarter was due in part to the warmer winter, which decreased the need for heating during the season that traditionally sees the most energy demand.



SAINT-AIGNAN (AFP) - Two Chinese pandas in a French zoo are chilling out in the current summer heatwave with the help of honey and apple ice creams. With temperatures set to touch 40 degrees Celsius (104F) in central France this weekend, Yuan Zi and Huan Huan have been enjoying the home-made treats as a supplement to their normal bamboo-based diet. "Since Thursday we've been giving them ice cream that we make ourselves three times a day," Rodolphe Delord, the director of Beauval Zoo, told AFP. "We also use cooling sprays and if it gets really hot they can go into their compound where the air conditioning is set at 20 degrees." The two pandas have increased visitor numbers at the zoo by 50 percent since their arrival from China in mid-February. But the star attractions are not getting special treatment: all the other bears in the zoo are also enjoying daily ice creams.

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## WHAT IN BLAZES!

## ACROSS

1. Maria's confidante
6. Cry noisily
9. Relatives: abbr.
12. Foretells
13. Pard
14. Knock off
15. Pat Buchanan's soapbox
17. "Frost/Nixon" director Howard
18. What temperatures do in July
19. Software purchasers
21. "Monsters, \_\_\_" (2001 computer-animated film)
24. Baseball's Nolan
26. Dame \_\_\_ Everage
27. Pursuit
29. Career military person
31. Said
33. Was merciful
36. "Both \_\_\_ Now"
38. Nick of "Affliction"
39. Musical symbol
41. Wrapped gown
43. "Ben Hur" author Wallace
44. Labor leader
46. Man in black
48. "Bad \_\_\_

Wanna Be" (Dennis Rodman)

49. Hook and ladder's home
54. Debussy's "La \_\_\_"
55. Ripen
56. Bobble
57. Before: prefix
58. Actor Steiger
59. Rudolph's master

## DOWN

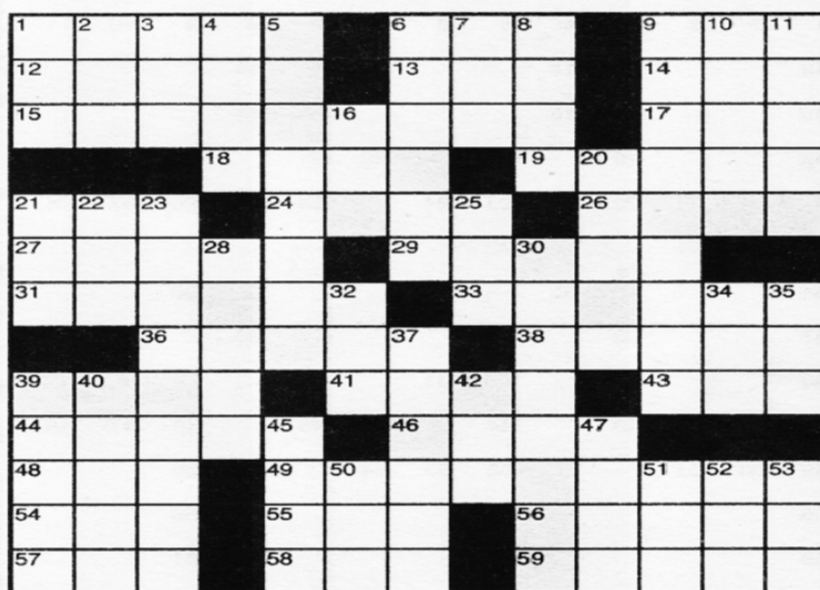
1. Start of a famous series
2. Negative correlative
3. Prelude to a kiss
4. Della's "angelic" role
5. Word on a

Crayola box

6. Death \_\_\_ (pairs skating move)
7. Rowboat need
8. \_\_\_ cheese
9. Classroom interruption
10. Baby oak
11. Eggheads' group
16. Actress Bainter
20. Take care of
21. School records numbers
22. Pea or butter follower
23. Truce
25. Feature of November's air
28. Rigid
30. Wraps up

32. Author Pamela \_\_\_ Barres

34. Montreal season
35. Moisture on the lawn
37. Blessed
39. Chew vigorously
40. Defeated one
42. Field's rabble-rousing role
45. From \_\_\_ (distantly)
47. Time unit in Tampico
50. "Just a Song Before \_\_\_"
51. Ornamental vase
52. Heavy drinker
53. Pitcher's stat



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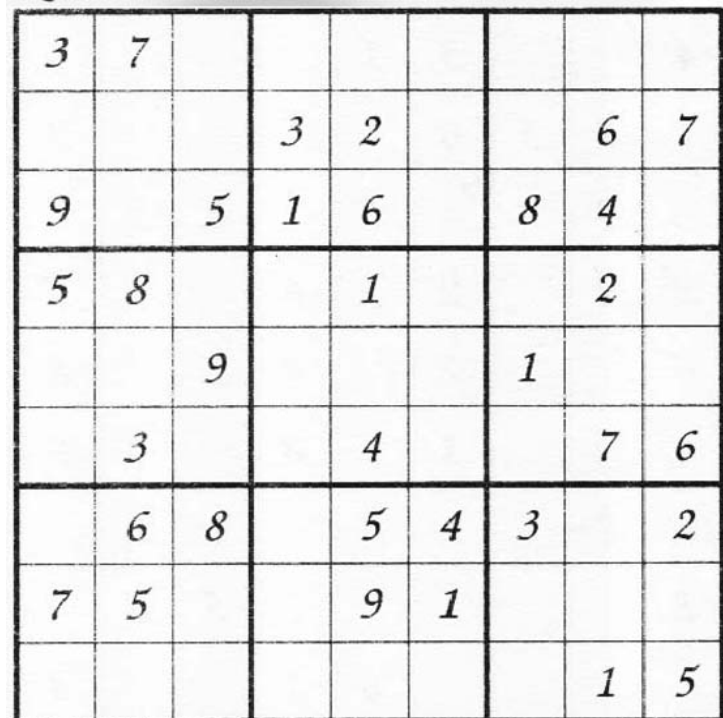
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# Sudoku



SOLUTION

5	1	4	9	8	7	6	3	2
4	8	9	1	6	2	5	3	7
2	6	5	4	3	8	9	1	7
9	2	8	7	6	1	5	4	3
8	5	1	2	4	9	3	7	6
6	7	3	5	1	9	4	8	2
3	9	8	2	9	1	5	7	6
4	9	6	5	7	3	2	1	8
1	5	7	6	8	4	9	2	3

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9  
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.  
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



Daily Exchange Rates				
Current as 08/17/2012	Currency Code	Buying rate banknotes	Buying Cheques	Selling Rate
U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00	100.20
Canada	CAD	1.78	1.80	1.82
Britain	GBP	2.73	2.78	2.84
Switzerland	CHF	182.74	183.46	184.26
Netherlands	EUR	217.74	219.73	221.94
Sweden	SEK	25.56	26.28	27.08
Denmark	DKK	28.54	29.26	30.06
Norway	NOK	29.01	29.73	30.53
Japan	JPY	222.25	224.28	226.54
(per 100)				
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## Dutch row over euro fiscal pact gains pace

THE HAGUE - The euro's new fiscal pact has become a political football in the Netherlands ahead of September elections, with Finance Minister Jan Kees de Jager yesterday dismissing opposition suggestions it should reject the treaty.

Socialist leader Emile Roemer, who some polls show on course to become the next prime minister, said the Netherlands would refuse to pay a penalty to the European Union if its budget deficit exceeded 3 percent of GDP, breaking EU rules.

His party also signaled it would demand a referendum on the compact, a core element in Europe's attempts to fix its debt crisis.

De Jager - whose Christian Democrat party ruled in coalition with the Liberals until the government's collapse in April - yesterday reiterated the

Netherlands' commitment to the EU's 3 percent budget deficit rule.

He said some investors had called the ministry to seek clarity on Roemer's comments and that he and other officials were working to reassure them that the Netherlands would meet its obligations under European guidelines no matter what party was in charge.

"We wanted these rules ourselves. You have to stick to international agreements. Therefore we need stricter rules to prevent a debt crisis as seen in the past years. A different opinion is counter-productive," De Jager said.

The Dutch deficit is expected to be 4.2 percent of GDP in 2012, but the government has promised it will fall to 2.9 percent, below the EU target, by a deadline of 2013.

"The government has to get things working again. And then I have to pay a ridiculous penalty if the deficit is larger than 3 percent? Over my dead body," Roemer was quoted as saying in Dutch financial newspaper Het Financieele Dagblad.

"The Netherlands is one of the biggest net payers (to the EU). Spain also gets more time. That should apply to everyone. We have to do what is wise," Roemer said.



**LONG BEACH, CA - Gas prices over \$4 is displayed at the Arco gas station in Long Beach, California. Gas prices in Los Angeles County rose yesterday for the 34th time in 35 days, increasing four-tenths of a cent to \$4.115, its highest amount since June 11**

### YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

EMMA	TAJ	PASO
ROY	ALI	ARIA
GOBI	MAMACASS	
STRAP	INK	
ONION	DESKS	
TAT	GRAB	ROOT
ASH	SAVED	NBA
LEES	LETO	OER
CARTE	SHEAF	
ERA	SMART	
UNCLEJOE	OGEE	
SEAL	AWL	NUBS
EDNA	REM	GNAT

## Finance

# Record eurozone trade surplus, analysts say austerity works

BRUSSELS (AFP) - The eurozone posted a record surplus in the trade of goods in June, the EU said yesterday, in what analysts said was a clear sign that austerity and structural economic reforms are working.

The European Union's data agency Eurostat said the 17-nation currency area's surplus in the trade of goods surged to 14.9 billion euros (\$18.4 billion) according to preliminary monthly figures, the highest since it began collating numbers in 1999.

That was up from just 200 million euros for the same month in 2011. Exports rising by 2.4 percent compared to May, according to seasonally adjusted figures, while imports remained stable.

At the same time, the European Central Bank in Frankfurt announced that the eurozone's current account surplus grew to 12.7 billion euros in June from 10.3 billion in May.

The current account on the balance of payments, which includes imports and exports in both goods and services plus all other current transfers, is a closely tracked indicator of the

ability of a country or area to pay its way in the world.

It is crucial for the long-term confidence of investors and trading partners.

"The eurozone is on the right track," said analyst Christian Schulz at Germany's Berenberg Bank.

"Structural reforms im-

prove competitiveness and austerity reduces imbalances.

If this process continues -- and Germany and the ECB are doing their best to ensure that -- the eurozone can emerge from this crisis as a much more dynamic and competitive economy."

## NY Times boss Thompson eyes \$8m payday

NEW YORK (AFP) - Incoming New York Times CEO Mark Thompson stands to make at least \$8 million dollars by the end of 2013, financial filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission revealed Friday.

The outgoing BBC director general will be paid a base salary of \$1 million, a sum that will be substantially padded by assorted perks, bonuses and benefits.

When he starts work in November, the 55-year-old will be eligible for a \$3 million signing-on bonus, \$100,000 in relocation allowances, \$25,000

for legal fees and \$333,000 in salary and bonuses until the end of this year.

In 2013 he will also be eligible for \$1 million a year under the company's annual incentive program and be able to tap \$3 million as part of the company's long-term incentive program, bringing the total to nearly \$8.5 million.

The Times, which is America's most prestigious newspaper as well as a growing online news power, said it had recruited Thompson for his ability to develop non-traditional news products.

## Apple stock hits new high on gadget rumors

NEW YORK (AFP) - Apple stock price leaped to a new high on Friday amid rumors it is poised to hit the market with new versions of iPhone, iPad, and Apple TV devices.

Apple shares were trading at \$644.52 mid-day on the Nasdaq exchange, buoyed by a Jefferies investment bank analyst advising clients that the price could climb to \$900.

The arrival of the iPhone 5 "will be the biggest handset launch in history," Jefferies investment bank analyst Peter Misek said in a note raising the target price for Apple stock

and giving it a 'buy' rating.

Jefferies reasoned that Apple is positioned to take a significant portion of the profit to be generated by hot trends in smartphones, tablet computers, and gadgets linking to the Internet on latest-generation 4G networks.

The Internet has been abuzz with unconfirmed reports that Apple will introduce a new iPhone, perhaps with a larger screen, at a press event in September.

The Cupertino, California-based company is also believed to be readying a smaller ver-

sion of its market-ruling iPad and a revamped Apple TV box, referred to unofficially as "iTV," that routes video or programming to televisions.

"We believe the iTV is in full production," Misek said.

Jefferies raised its forecast for iPad sales from 18 million to 25 million for the third quarter and from 22-25 million to 30 million for the final three months of this year.

Apple has the largest market capitalization in the United States, with its stock giving it a value of about \$602.25 billion.



Photo shows dredgers at work shaping the Maasvlakte 2, the latest development to the Port of Rotterdam, built off the North Sea coast. When finished in 2033, Europe's biggest harbour will have almost doubled its container volume to an estimated 36 million containers per year.



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## Russia jails Pussy Riot protest punks for two years

MOSCOW (AFP) - A Moscow court Friday handed a two-year jail sentence to three feminist punk rockers who infuriated the Kremlin and captured world attention by ridiculing President Vladimir Putin in Russia's main church.

EU foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton immediately called the decision "disproportionate" while hundreds of people rallied in other countries calling on the Russian strongman to set the young Pussy Riot members free.

Judge Marina Syrova said the three protesters had displayed a "clear disrespect toward society" by staging a "Punk Prayer" performance just weeks ahead of Putin's historic but controversial March election to a third term.

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina -- 22 and 24 respectively and both mothers of young children -- and 30-year-old Yekaterina Samutsevich had exchanged glances and laughed nervously as they listened to the marathon verdict reading from inside a glass cage.

"They will not be asking (Putin) for a pardon," their attorney Nikolai Polozov said only moments after the verdict was read.

The trio had pulled on knitted masks and stripped down to short fluorescent dresses near



the altar of Moscow's biggest cathedral on February 21 before belting out a raucous chorus calling on the Virgin Mary to "drive out Putin".

To many they represented prime examples of the promise-filled but ever more disenchanted youth whose support Putin could almost certainly have counted on at the start of his 12-year domination as both president and premier.

The state-appointed judge opened the hearing with dozens of passionate supporters of the band and the Russian Orthodox Church being held apart by riot police and Western diplomats jostling with reporters for a spot inside the courtroom.

Witnesses saw about 30 Pussy Riot fans -- the radical leftist leader Sergei Udaltsov among them -- being taken away into waiting vans by police.

The once-unheralded band members have already been held in pre-trial detention for five months despite international protests about their treatment by Putin's team.

The three have asked the faithful to forgive them for causing offence but vigorously defended their view that Russia had made little progress in the 12 years of Putin's domination from the worst of its totalitarian

days.

The sentence was handed down as Pussy Riot release rallies were staged across Europe, bolstered by a campaign backed by celebrities such as Paul McCartney, Bjork and Madonna while rallies for their release took place in London, Kiev, Sofia, Barcelona, Brussels and Paris directed against Putin's crackdown on dissent.

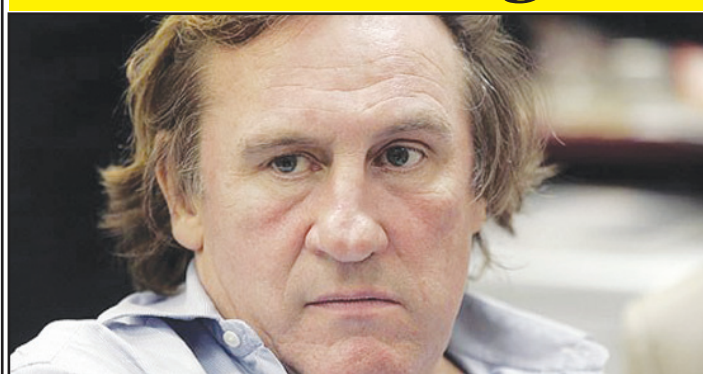
The verdict was delivered in the same week that Putin marks the first 100 days of a third Kremlin term he has already used to slap new restrictions on protests and political organisations with foreign sources of income.

Yet the moves -- all stemming from Putin's charge that Washington was funding the historic protests against his return to the Kremlin last winter -- appear to be backfiring.

A poll published on the front page of the Vedomosti business daily on Friday showed Putin's approval rating slipping to a post-election low of 48 percent -- a notable slide from the 60 percent he enjoyed around his May inauguration.

Meanwhile the Russian Orthodox Church urged the authorities to show "mercy" to three members of the feminist punk band.

## Oh No, Not Again!



PARIS (AFP) - Gerard Depardieu is in hot water again after an alleged road rage incident in the middle of Paris in which the French film star admitted he may have gone "a bit over the top." A Parisian driver has accused Depardieu of punching him in the face after he swerved his car into the path of the actor's scooter in the chic left-bank quarter of the French capital earlier this week. "There was a car, the driver wasn't paying attention and 'paf!'" Depardieu told RTL radio on Friday. "It was more a case of fear than anything else," he added. Police have not yet decided whether to follow up the driver's complaint, which Depardieu claimed had only been lodged because of his celebrity status. Depardieu, 63, is arguably the outstanding French actor of his generation but he has cut an increasingly troubled figure in recent years, regularly seeming to be under the influence of alcohol on his public appearances.

## Well-wishers donate \$4.4 mn to US cinema shooting victims

CENTENNIAL (AFP) - Well-wishers from the United States and around the world have donated \$4.4 million to a fund for the victims of a mass shooting at a US movie theater, a court heard yesterday.

Chief Judge William Sylvester agreed to allow prosecutors to release the victims' names and contact information to the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance, which works with victims of crimes and natural disasters.

"We understand some of the victims are in dire straits, needing money to pay rent and buy food," said Senior Deputy District Attorney Richard Orman, pressing the court to move speedily on the issue.

On July 20, 24-year-old graduate student James

Holmes burst into a showing on the latest Batman film in Aurora, in the suburbs of the western US city of Denver, and opened fire, killing 12 moviegoers and wounding 58.

Holmes, his bright orange hair color fading to pink after four weeks in jail, was present for the 35-minute hearing but did not speak. He faces a possible death penalty if convicted of the murders.

The court received about 100 pages of documents from the University of Colorado Medical School, where Holmes was a neuroscience graduate student before the shootings.

Next week, attorneys will discuss whether the documents may be released to prosecutors as they build their case.





## Cool Casino...where those in the know go to play!



The great perks of gaming at Cool Casino in the Palm Beach has created a dedicated clientele; ask them what they like about the cozy casino, and they don't know where to start! The free slot tournaments every Sunday? Major pay-offs in their weekly Blackjack tournaments every Tuesday and Friday? Ladies' night every Wednesday with entertainment from great local bands? Or perhaps just the terrific benefits of being "One Cool Member" which earns players bonus points towards additional activities, free dinners, day passes at the Riu Resort, credit for play, or best of all: hard, cool cash! The casino opens daily at 10:00 AM and on Saturdays and Sundays, all are greeted with an early morning

"Kaffie Klatch" and triple points when using their membership cards.

Cool Casino is a great place to learn to understand



such table games as Craps and Roulette, as they offer free instructions and minimums for beginners with which anyone can have fun and feel very comfortable. High-stakes tables and a major weekly

blackjack tournament will keep veteran high-rollers happy, as well as periodic special events that attract an international crowd; stop by and check their schedule.

Add to all this free drinks while testing the slots or trying your hand at the tables, and the opportunity to enjoy exclusive pay-per-view major sporting events at one of their dozens of plasma screens, and you can understand why loyal patrons find Cool Casino THE fun place to play. Slot machines are open from 10:00 AM until 4:00 AM daily, and gaming tables open at 5:00 PM; ask for their schedule of special events and bonuses, as there are so many choose from, but every day offers something to get the adrenaline flowing!



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phere characterizes the apartment complex, with an invitation to enjoy a relaxing atmosphere in its different areas: in the pool under the Caribbean sun, on the terrace reading a book, preparing a good barbecue by the pool, or in your apartment with total privacy.

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**LOS ANGELES --** More than 20,000 pairs of counterfeit Louboutin pumps and high heels featuring the distinctive red sole of French designer Christian Louboutin are displayed at Price Transfer Warehouse yesterday in Long Beach, California. The shipment of the fake Christian Louboutin shoes were intercepted from China at Los Angeles by federal customs officials. The shoes are worth a street value of roughly \$18 million, according to US border patrol. "The lacquered red sole in women's shoes is a distinctive symbol of famous French designer Christian Louboutin," U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesman Jaime Ruiz said in a statement to KTLA. He also noted that the distinctive soles are also "a trademark protected by U.S. law." According to the Daily Mail, the French shoe designer doesn't only have problems with knockoffs from China. It also encountered copyright problems with rival luxury designers. In 2011, Louboutin filed a trademark infringement against Yves Saint Laurent after the latter sold shoes with the signature red sole.



## SPORTS

# Ferdinand fined £45,000 over 'choc ice' tweet



LONDON (AFP) - Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand was fined £45,000 (\$70,000, 57,000 euros) by the Football Association on Friday for improper conduct over comments he made on Twitter relating to the John Terry racism trial.

Chelsea captain Terry was found not guilty last month of racially abusing QPR defender Anton Ferdinand, Rio's brother, during a Premier League game on October 23 last year, although he is also now contesting a FA charge over the same incident.

During the trial, Ferdinand appeared to endorse a tweet by another user of the micro-blogging website which described Chelsea defender Ashley Cole, who gave evidence on behalf

of Terry in the trial, as a "choc ice".

The term is understood to mean someone who is black on the outside but white on the inside.

The FA felt Ferdinand's support for the controversial tweet brought the game into disrepute and the 33-year-old was given his punishment on Friday.

"Manchester United's Rio Ferdinand has been fined £45,000 after an independent regulatory commission found proven a charge of improper conduct in relation to a comment posted on Twitter," an FA statement read.

"The commission decided that the comment was improper and brought the game into disrepute. In addition, the

commission found that the breach included a reference to ethnic origin, colour or race."

Cole, who also told the court he was a long-standing friend of the Ferdinand brothers, was accused by one person who sent a tweet to Rio Ferdinand of being a "choc ice".

The person wrote: "Looks like Ashley Cole's going to be their choc ice. Then again he's always been a sell out. Shame on him."

Manchester United defender Rio, who has played with Terry at the heart of England's defence, replied: "I hear you fella! Choc ice is classic! hahahahahha!!!"

Users began discussing the comments and reacting to them and Ferdinand wrote: "And if I want to laugh at something someone tweets....I will! Hahahahaha! Now stop getting ya knickers in a twist!"

United boss Sir Alex Ferguson believes Ferdinand's punishment highlights the danger of star players using Twitter.

Ferguson revealed United's squad are banned from talking about the club on Twitter and he warned that players who let off steam on the internet are asking for trouble from the F.A.

## United offer too good to refuse - Van Persie



MANCHESTER (AFP) - Robin van Persie completed his controversial transfer to Manchester United insisting there are no hard feelings with his former club Arsenal and revealing that his inner child convinced him to move to Old Trafford.

The Dutch international is expected to make his United debut in the season opener with Everton on Monday after the formalities were finalised over his reported £24 million (\$37 million, 30.6 million euros) transfer from Arsene

Wenger's side.

Van Persie admitted that it was a hard decision to leave North London after eight successful years but that, ultimately, United's was the proverbial offer he could not refuse.

Meanwhile Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger on Friday admitted that his decision to allow Robin van Persie to join Manchester United was a "massive gamble" that could damage his side's hopes of a successful season.

Wenger said he could have

made him see out the final year of his contract and was aware the loss of an inspirational figure who scored 37 goals in all competitions last season was a major blow, as the club seeks to end a seven-year trophy drought.

But the Frenchman felt it was a gamble worth taking because he wants to have a fully committed team going into the new Premier League campaign, which starts with a home game against Sunderland today.

Van Persie was heavily tipped for potential moves to champions Manchester City or Italian giants Juventus this summer before protracted talks between United manager Sir Alex Ferguson and Wenger resulted in him making the move to Old Trafford - a transfer which angered the majority of Gunners supporters, judging by their outcry.

For his part, van Persie has clearly been enthused by the prospect of linking with established United stars, as part of a strike force that already boasts the lethal England forward Wayne Rooney.

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(AFP) - Young Chilean striker Angelo Henriquez is to join Manchester United, his club Universidad de Chile announced in a statement on Friday. The talented 18-year-old will join United for a fee of \$5.5 million (£3.5m), after undergoing a medical in England this week, and will become the first Chilean ever to play for the Old Trafford club. "The player is physically and mentally prepared to take this determining step in his career," added the selling club. Henriquez first came to the attention of United when he was playing in the Chilean capital club's youth system. "Manchester United's representatives told us that it was fundamental for them to take him now," said Jose Yuraszcek, president of 'La U'. Henriquez made his Chilean league debut this year, scoring 10 goals in 15 games, while he also netted four times in this year's Libertadores Cup.





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## Diana Nyad plans 4th Cuba-Florida swim



MIAMI (AFP) - Veteran US endurance swimmer Diana Nyad announced Thursday that she will try for the fourth time to swim the treacherous waters from Cuba to Florida without a shark cage.

Nyad, who will launch her attempt from Cuba at 7:00 am (1100 GMT) on Sunday -- four days before turning 63 -- abandoned her most recent attempt in September 2011 after medics warned she had suffered dangerous jellyfish stings.

Nyad is seeking to become the first person to make the 103-mile (165-kilometer) swim across the Florida Straits without a shark cage.

The upcoming swim "will require at least 60 hours of continuous nonstop effort,"

Nyad's personal blog said.

The swimmer failed on two other bids to swim from Cuba to Florida, in 1978 and in August 2011. Shoulder pain, asthma and ocean swells hobbled Nyad's second attempt.

Nyad set an open sea record by swimming from the Bahamas to the Florida Keys -- a journey that is the same distance as the Cuba-Florida swim, but a feat she has described as much less dangerous.

And she set a record for circling the island of Manhattan at age 50, clocking in at seven hours and 57 minutes.

In July, British-Australian athlete Penny Palfrey, 49, failed to swim unassisted from Cuba to Florida and had to be plucked from the ocean after 40 hours in the water when she could no longer cope with a strong ocean current.

In her last attempt, Nyad had a support team of some 30 people aboard five yachts, including shark divers and four people aboard kayaks.

## Messi and Ronaldo .... continued from page 16

New coach Mauricio Pellegrino will be able to choose from four new signings, including Mexican Andres Guardado and former Madrid midfielder Fernando Gago.

Forward Roberto Soldado, the highest-scoring Spaniard with 17 goals last season, should shake off a niggling injury in time.

Also on Sunday, Europa League winners Atletico Madrid start their campaign at last season's surprise package Levante, with a growing injury list ahead of next week's UEFA Super Cup tie with Chelsea.

Belgian goalkeeper Thibaud Courtois returned with damaged ribs from international duty and is a doubt, while international full-back Juan Francisco Torres -- "Juanfran" -- twisted a knee in Spain's game in Puerto Rico and is definitely out.

Adrian, Felipe Luis and Diego Costa are also doubtful Atletico.

Athletic Bilbao's build-up to their home game with Betis has not been ideal after a week in which they have come close

to losing two star players in Fernando Llorente and Javi Martinez.

First, forward Llorente announced his decision not to sign a contract extension before it was revealed Bayern Munich were willing to pay the 40 million euros (\$49 million, £31 million) required to free Martinez from the Basque side.

Aritz Aduriz's return to Bilbao from Valencia will do little to appease home fans who will be sure to be vocal.

### This weekend's matches:

#### Saturday

Celta Vigo v Malaga (1700 GMT), Sevilla v Getafe (1900 GMT), Mallorca v Espanyol (2100 GMT)

#### Sunday

Real Madrid v Valencia (1700 GMT), Athletic Bilbao v Betis (1700 GMT), Barcelona v Real Sociedad (1900 GMT), Levante v Atletico Madrid (2100 GMT)

#### Monday

Deportivo v Osasuna (1700 GMT), Rayo Vallecano v Granada (1900 GMT), Zaragoza v Valladolid (2100 GMT)

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SAN DIEGO (AFP) - Major League Baseball has approved the sale of the San Diego Padres to a group headed by San Diego businessman Ron Fowler. Fowler's group agreed to purchase the club from John Moores earlier this month. Fowler will be the controlling owner with partners that include PGA Tour golfer Phil Mickelson, and Kevin O'Malley and Tom Seidler, the son and nephew of former Los Angeles Dodgers owner Peter O'Malley. "I am pleased to congratulate Ron Fowler, the Seidler and O'Malley families and all of their partners as they become the new stewards of the San Diego Padres," said baseball commissioner Bud Selig on Thursday. The San Diego Union-Tribune had reported the sale price to be about \$800 million. Moores had owned the Padres for the past eight years.

## MLB Standings

American League					National League				
East	W	L	Pct	GB	East	W	L	Pct	GB
YANKEES	70	48	.593	--	WASHINGTON	73	45	.619	--
BALTIMORE	64	54	.542	6.0	ATLANTA	69	49	.585	4.0
TAMPA	64	54	.542	6.0	NY METS	56	62	.475	17.0
BOSTON	58	61	.487	12.5	PHILADELPHIA	54	64	.458	19.0
TORONTO	55	63	.466	15.0	MIAMI	53	66	.445	20.5
Central	W	L	Pct	GB	Central	W	L	Pct	GB
CHICAGO	65	52	.556	--	CINCINNATI	71	47	.602	--
DETROIT	63	55	.534	2.5	PITTSBURG	65	53	.551	6.0
CLEVELAND	54	64	.458	11.5	ST. LOUIS	64	54	.542	7.0
KANSAS	51	66	.436	14.0	MILWAUKEE	53	64	.453	17.5
MINNESOTA	50	67	.427	15.0	CHICAGO	46	70	.397	24.0
West	W	L	Pct	GB	West	W	L	Pct	GB
TEXAS	68	49	.581	--	HOUSTON	39	80	.328	32.5
OAKLAND	62	55	.530	6.0	LA DODGERS	65	54	.546	--
LA ANGELES	62	57	.521	7.0	SAN FRANCISCO	64	54	.542	0.5
SEATTLE	55	64	.462	14.0	ARIZONA	59	59	.500	5.5
					SAN DIEGO	52	68	.433	13.5
					COLORADO	45	71	.388	18.5

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## Maradona in \$3.2 million China legal action

BEIJING (AFP) - Argentine football great Diego Maradona attended a Beijing court hearing Friday which was considering his \$3.2 million image rights claim against two Chinese Internet companies, state media said.

Maradona accuses the companies of using his name and picture for an online gaming site without asking his permission, news agency Xinhua said.

A Beijing court heard the case against Beijing Sina Internet Information Service Co Ltd -- operator of one of China's largest internet portals Sina.com -- and Shanghai No. 9 City Information Technology Co Ltd, it said.

A cartoon image of Maradona in his Argentinian blue and white-striped national team shirt could still be found at the game's website qiuqi.9c.com, on Friday morning, Xinhua added.

However, it appeared to have been removed later in the day when AFP checked.

Maradona's agent in China, Tang Qinghui, told AFP that she could not comment on the case.

However, sources told Xinhua that the 51-year-old is seeking 20 million yuan (\$3.2

million) in compensation.

Tang said Maradona is in China to discuss with football officials how the game can be developed in the country at grass roots level.

But there has been speculation in the Chinese media that he is being lined up to become coach of the national football team.

The former coach of the Argentina national team and United Arab Emirates club Al Wasl held meetings with top Chinese Football Association officials on Thursday.

Tang said Maradona -- who became a hate figure among England fans following his infamous "Hand of God" handball goal at the 1986 World Cup -- will also be giving advice to referees and coaches in China.

CFA spokesman Dong Hua also said that the manager's position was not discussed.

Ex-Real Madrid and Spain boss Jose Antonio Camacho was lured to China as manager on a reported \$8 million-a-year contract last year.

However, the national team is already out of the running for the 2014 World Cup after it failed to get through a qualifying group topped by Iraq.

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## Messi and Ronaldo back as La Liga begins today

MADRID (AFP) - The Spanish league season kicks-off today with Barcelona star Lionel Messi insisting it is not just a battle between himself and Cristiano Ronaldo.

"With Cristiano I have absolutely no problem. All that is said about us is to do with the press who want us to have our own personal battle but I have never competed with him or fought him," said the 25 year-old current holder of the FIFA Ballon d'Or. "I just try to do my job in the best way possible to win trophies for my national team and Barcelona", he continued after scoring in Argentina's 3-1 win over Germany on Wednesday night.

The two players were neck-and-neck in the goalscoring charts last season, with the Argentinian hitting 50 in the league compared to Ronaldo's 46, with an incredible 73 in all competitions for Messi and 60 for the Madrid star.

Madrid finished the season nine points clear of a Barca side that still managed to lift 4 titles in what was to be Pep Guardiola's last season of a hugely successful time for the Catalans.

The two giants kick-off the new campaign on Sunday with home games against Valencia and Real Sociedad, with one



Barcelona's Messi (L) and Real Madrid's Ronaldo (R)

eye on their two-legged Spanish Super Cup encounter over the next two weeks.

The first-leg is in the Camp Nou next Thursday before the return game in Madrid 6 days later.

Barca begin a new era under Tito Vilanova, Pep Guardiola's assistant for four seasons, with virtually the same squad as last term.

Spain left-back Jordi Alba is until now the only arrival from Valencia but more may follow.

Barca's Brazilian defender Adriano has seen little change so far under the new coach.

"Training is the same as we had with Pep and the philosophy is the same, there won't be too many changes," he said.

Carles Puyol is available for

Sunday after a knee injury that kept him out of Euro 2012 and David Villa is almost back from the fractured tibia that saw him sit out most of last season, but he is not expected to be pushed into action immediately.

Madrid have also changed very little a team that brought to an end Guardiola's three consecutive titles with a record 100 points and 121 goals.

Ronaldo will be backed once again by Karim Benzema and Gonzalo Higuain to provide the firepower for Jose Mourinho's team.

Valencia, however, ended last season third for the third successive year and will provide a severe test in Madrid's opening defence of the title.

*continues on page 15*

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